

Berwyn, PA — Governed by the lunar calendar, the Chinese New Year began on Thursday, February 7. This is the Year of the Rat, which is the first in a 12-year calendar cycle marked by the names of various animals. Those born under the rat are said to be honest, popular, ambitious, clever and inventive.

— To celebrate the Chinese year of 4706, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA – 07) attended the Upper Main Line YMCA third-annual Chinese New Year Festival. He attended the festival last year, and said he was happy to return in the Year of the Rat.

"I very much enjoyed this cultural festival last year, and was pleased to come back and celebrate the Chinese New Year," said the Congressman. "The Asian Pacific American community has a rich heritage of cultural and tradition and has been instrumental in the advancement of our society."

The celebration was part of the YMCA's Y-World Cultures program, which promotes global awareness, increases cross-cultural interactions among youth and families, and develops a culture of peace in our communities.

Earlier in the weekend, Congressman Sestak attended the Media Business Authority Chinese New Year Parade where he also addressed the crowd.

"It was great to ring in the Lunar New Year with everyone at this parade," said the Congressman. "I wish everyone in the Chinese community a happy, healthy and prosperous new year, and am honored to be part of this year's festivities."

Chinese months are reckoned by the lunar calendar, with each month beginning on the darkest day. New Year festivities traditionally start on the first day of the month and continue until the fifteenth, when the moon is brightest.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.